

**Draft minutes of the February 3, 2009
Woodsbay-Bigfork 400 Working Group
held at 10:00 AM at Saddlehorn Discovery Tower
Bigfork, Montana**

Present Members:

Kevin Gownley, Greg Poncin (DNRC), Anne Moran (DNRC), Jim Frizzell, Kitty Rich, Paul Rana

Absent members:

George Darrow, Dave Landstrom (MFWP), Clarice Ryan, Steve Brady (USFS)

Guests: Bill Meyers

The meeting began with a discussion of Tracy's scheduling conflict on Tuesdays and it was of general opinion that her presence and skills were sorely missed. Kitty Rich offered to give it a shot for today and later volunteered to contact Tracy and see if we get her back on board.

Discussion followed on approving the January 14 meeting minutes; Anne suggested the minutes might need some revisions. She said she would take care of that, and get it out later, and suggested that approval be deferred to the next meeting.

Greg placed up large worksheet, 3' x 4', with the seven goals:

1. **Compensation to Beneficiary**
2. **Land Management/Access – Timber, Weeds, Recreation**
3. **Fire Safety – Fuel Reduction**
4. **Education – Living Classroom**
5. **Preservation of Wildlife Corridors and uniqueness of area**
6. **No Development**
7. **Do this in a timely manner**

We recognize different solutions/combinations of solutions may be most effective to address:

The Short-Term Need

The Intermediate Need

The Long-term Need

Anne stated that a community member had approached her about what was happening with the 440 Group, and suggested that in the near future we should have review our processes for staying in touch with the community, and that was agreed upon..

Bill opened the discussion with the need for a 10 year plan and a 100 year plan, and discussion followed on how timber sales and/or firewood cutting are typically administered. Jim then answered that the timber on the 440 does not really have much dollar value, and Kevin stated that he didn't want a bunch of drinking idiots with chain saws running around the woods.

Bill then went into a discussion about income from bio-mass with wood chips, from timber and firewood. Greg then mentioned That DNRC has a program dealing with bio-mass, and that off the Foothills project they receive 12 cents per ton, and they have no problem with having materials.

Kevin then wanted to know what parcels the DNRC might have to exchange. Anne reminded that the two initially identified parcels have been reviewed by DNRC management and DNRC has determined they do not wish to accept those parcels, however they are willing to look at other parcels.. At which point Kevin adamantly asked his question of **what** would it take to make the DNRC happy? Specifically, what would it take? What dollar figure are we talking?

Greg then stated that at the next meeting he would provide information on some other parcels, but then reiterated that a land exchange is not the easiest method, at least for the short-term solution. On a different project when an exchange between the USFS and DNRC was attempted, it took 16 years and too many steps and hoops, and got nowhere. Anne then spoke of the c Audubon area as an example of a lease and yes the annual fee was around \$6-700 and yes the value of the 440 was different because the

other was bottom land. She also said that if it was designated as Natural Area, the land classification might shift to "other" and be leased in that direction (not a land use license), she would have more info on that later. She also stated that as a Natural Area it would be more attractive to future supporters however there are also stipulations Greg stated the it would offer permanent protection and takes care of short term and long term goals and yet there were stipulation specific to Natural Areas. Kevin brought out the permanent access issue, and Greg said yes, they would want permanent access.

Bill then adamantly pointed out the documentation - Montana Code Annotated-2007 77-5-116 - 77-5-116. **State forest lands--deferral of management prohibited.**

. "Unless the full market value of the property interest or of the revenue foregone is obtained, the board and the department are prohibited from either temporarily designating, treating or disposing of any interest in any state forest lands for the following Purposes;

- 1) as a **natural area** pursuant to Title 76, chapter 12, part 1, or as otherwise provided for by law;
- 2) as open-space land as defined in 76-6-104;
- 3) for old growth timber preservation; and
- 4) as a wild life area

Jim said it could be called "Estes Lake Natural Area". Bill stated that we could look into becoming a non-profit Kevin agreed, however Anne the stated that it was still early for that, but it was a good idea. She stated that it would be a good idea that everyone review the material that was sent earlier.

- 1) State of Montana -DNRC- Land Use Licensee - Other. License#3053246 ; Audubon - Owen/Sauerwine
- 2) Information on Natural Areas that had been previously circulated by email.

The next meeting date was identified as Monday, March 9, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., same location.